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Don's Conference Notes--Electronic Resources & Libraries Conference

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Electronic Resources & Libraries

Column Editor's Note: Because of space limitations, this is an abridged version of my report on this conference. You can read the full article which includes descriptions of additional sessions at <http://www.against-the-grain.com/2016/06/v28-3-dons-conference-notes/>. — DTH

The 11th Electronic Resources & Libraries (ER&L) Conference drew about 800 attendees — a record number — to Austin, the capital of Texas, on April 4-6, 2016.

They represented libraries, museums, hospitals, publishers, and aggregators in 49 states (all except South Dakota) and 10 countries. The conference featured the usual mix of pre-conference workshops, plenary and breakout sessions, as well as a tabletop exhibit hall. The conference venue was the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center on the campus of the University of Texas.

The first ER&L Conference, which attracted 200 attendees, was held in March 2006.¹ It was organized by Bonnie Tijerina, formerly at Harvard University, and now Fellow at the Data & Society Institute, “to facilitate communication and foster collaboration among information management professionals working to manage electronic resources.”

Still the convener and driving force behind ER&L, Bonnie is largely responsible for its success. Since 2014, presentations focusing on the user experience in libraries have been collected into a separate conference, Designing for Digital (<http://www.designingfordigital.com/>) that immediately follows ER&L. This year, there were 150 attendees at Designing for Digital.



The Texas Capitol



Bonnie Tijerina

Finding Time: The Opening Keynote

The opening keynote by Professor Dawna Ballard, College of Communication, University of Texas, was entitled “Finding Time: From Industrial Mythology to Chronemic Literacy.” (Chronemics is the study of time as it is bound to human communication.) She said that time is a silent non-verbal body language. Everyone knows time differently, and it is central to our quality of life, assuming two forms:

1. *Industrial time* — what is measured on a clock. We need to step back and look at the hidden assumptions that we unconsciously use to manage our time.
2. *Pre-industrial or post-industrial time* — based on an event. There is a particular time to do things (for example, planting and harvesting in agriculture).

Here are three myths of the industrial world:

- *Better time management skills and tools will make you more productive.* But we often do not realize that time management is usually oriented with factory work. We are not in factories! The reality is that time management is not related to productivity.



Dawna Ballard

- *It is not true that if you love what you are doing, it doesn't feel like work.* Be wary of language that tries to mask work as something else. The human relations tradition was based around the idea that people love working. But there are human limits to work. Parenting is an example: we love our children, but caring for them may feel like work.
- *Focusing on work-life balance will lead to greater well-being.* The reality is that focusing on balance can create unending frustration. The idea of balance is something that machines do; the term does not apply to human beings. We are not trying to measure which is “heavier”: work or life. In our minds, the ideal could be represented by a person standing balanced on one leg, which would not be work because the person would not be moving. Instead, the reality can be pictured by someone standing on a tightrope and juggling several balls in the air. In such a situation, we feel that we cannot cope, get frustrated, and drop everything but the “work” ball. That seems like a choice but it really is not because we must have a job to support our families.

Open Content in Knowledge Bases

Jane Burke, VP of Customer Success at ExLibris, described the acquisition of ExLibris by ProQuest and said that the amount that libraries spend on licensed content is rapidly increasing. No library can manage e-resources on its own — working with multiple vendors is challenging, tedious, and time-consuming. ProQuest recently did a study of the ten databases to which libraries frequently subscribed and found that it requires about 81 hours/month to keep them updated.

ProQuest and ExLibris both have legacy databases. As part of their integration, a new combined knowledge base will be built. It will be relational, designed to support the future of libraries and research, and provide for interoperability and “temporal logic,” thus allowing studies on the development of the database over time.

Search, Serendipity, and the Researcher Experience

Lettie Conrad, Executive Manager, Product Analysis at SAGE, said that when considering serendipity, there is an important distinction between the chance encounter itself and realizing its relevance or importance, then turning it into insight. (Think of Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin. It took understanding to recognize that the substance growing on a contaminated Petri dish had antibiotic properties.) Publishers are often more focused on the first aspect, the stumbling upon something new, but they are less concerned with the second aspect, where the “ah-ha” moment happens. Serendipity matters because online systems allow searchers to reframe their information need as they proceed. Designing search systems for serendipity may be the Holy Grail of the search experience.

Key principles incorporated into “SAGE Recommends,” a new capability on the SAGE Knowledge platform that suggests items for further reading, were:

- Academic research is personal and content-focused (not behavior-focused),
- The point of serendipitous discovery is the user's current specific information need, and
- Serendipity should be unexpected.

Building a New Digital Library from the Ground Up

What would you do if you had nine months to build a complete digital medical library? That was the problem that Elizabeth Lorbeer faced at Western Michigan University's School of Medicine. Lorbeer made the following observations of the current signs of the times that influenced her thinking as she was setting up a digital library for the School:

- The “library” has no fixed space and is everywhere. The same is true of the librarian.
- New programs are attracting students at all learning levels.
- Learners are increasingly using mobile devices.

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- Systems have become demand-driven.
- We have fewer staff available to organize and manage collections.
- We must rethink how we buy content.

The digital library that **Lorbeer** designed is all digital, and its Website is designed to be mobile-centric. Products from **Serials Solutions** run the “back office,” and **Springshare’s** “Lib Guides” are used on the public Website. The collection began with access to 10,000 e-journals and 17,000 eBooks and has grown to about 74,000 unique titles through shared systems. Articles not available in the collection can be ordered through the library’s subscriptions to the **Copyright Clearance Center’s** “Get It Now” service (<http://www.copyright.com/rightsholders/get-it-now/>), the **R2 Digital Library** for health science professionals (<http://www.r2library.com/>), or by renting articles from **ReadCube** (<https://www.readcube.com/>).

Hard Data for Tough Choices: Electronic and Print Books in Academic Libraries

Matthew Connor Sullivan and **Katherine Leach** from the **Harvard University Library** said that there are two “givens” about academic eBooks:

1. eBooks have not supplanted printed books. They are used for quick reference and lighter reading; print books are used for deeper reading and research, and
2. Providing access to both is not possible, even for **Harvard University**, so purchasing decisions need to be made with care, and clear guidelines are necessary.

Users want and use both printed and electronic books; the challenge is to better understand user behavior.

Harvard has a huge collection of nearly 30,000 books, over 20,000 of which were published before 2012. The general patterns of usage for both printed and electronic books align closely. Most of the books in the collection were used at least once. Only 5% of the titles were used in both printed and electronic formats, leading **Sullivan** and **Leach** to conclude that eBooks were not being used for discovery of printed books.

Conclusions and questions from this study are:

- Users in the humanities and social sciences do not want the library to decrease their purchases of printed books.
- How do we work with publishers to avoid purchasing the same content twice?
- How can we serve users in different ways; what will be the effects on circulation desk staffing?
- What will be the effects on research, teaching, and learning?
- How can we shift money to purchasing e-books?

Alternative Avenues of Discovery: Competition or Potential

What does discovery mean and what do libraries need? Do library discovery systems make a difference? **Michael Levine-Clark**, Director, **University of Denver Libraries**, said that 39% of the referrals to a publisher from the **University of Denver** come from the library. A study that he and two colleagues conducted compared journal usage before and after a discovery system was implemented² and found that libraries implement discovery systems for a several reasons:

- To improve the user experience by providing a Google-like interface,
- To provide a single starting point when the user does not know where to search,
- To replace the catalog,
- To reduce the number of individual A&I databases (and possibly reduce costs), and
- To compete with Google and increase the number of users starting their searches at the library.

We should be asking ourselves these questions:

- Is there a future in search and content for libraries? What value is the library adding?

- What would happen if we just cede discovery to Google Scholar and similar systems? Do we even need to be using discovery systems?
- What is the promise and threat of open access?

Ido Peled, VP, Solutions and Marketing, **ExLibris**, said that wherever users are, we should reach out to them; be proactive and find out where they do their research. Here are three inseparable components of a discovery system:

1. Make sure that information is available everywhere and that it has maximum functionality.
2. Provide a simple and intuitive design of the interface. What can we do to make sure that access is simpler through all interfaces (80% of consumption by today’s younger users is via a mobile interface)?
3. Analyze students’ behavior and usage to facilitate a better interaction. Take risks, and if something does not work, try something else—today’s users are very accepting. Students will use library services because of personalization and serendipitous discovery.

Jason Price, Director of Licensing Operations at **SCELC**, described three emerging startup companies that have developed alternative avenues of discovery:

- **IScience OA Solutions** (<http://www.1science.com/>) finds all OA papers by an academic author wherever they are archived and allows users to easily download them and their metadata.
- **Zepheira** (<https://zepheira.com/>) allows a user to search for a full picture of a university’s content regardless of where it resides. It is a founding sponsor of the **LibHub Initiative** (<http://zepheira.com/solutions/library/libhub/>).
- **Yewno** (<http://corp.yewno.com/>) is a discovery firm based on ideas. It allows users to find associations between concepts and display them visually through its Hyperassociation of Related Instances (**HARI**, <http://search.hariscience.com/>) tool.

When E-Resources Are Used “Too Much”

What do you do when you observe excessive use of your e-resources? **Laura McNamara**, Electronic Resources Librarian at **Thomas Jefferson University (TJU)**, was faced with that situation when a vendor detected unusually high downloading of items from a database to which **TJU** subscribed. Previous security procedures must be adapted to today’s changing environment. It is important to proactively monitor logs rather than wait for the vendor to contact you. View server status to find open sessions and terminate them if necessary. Learn how to communicate technical language to non-technical staff and train them to find intrusion attempts by detecting multiple failed logon attempts. Suspicious events include use far above what is possible with ordinary browsing, all downloading directed to PDFs, and sessions with no browsing activity.

It is important to cultivate interdepartmental relationships and make the library’s privacy policy available without giving the impression that the library is trying to restrict access to information. Vendors should be cultivated to establish a partner relationship so that access is not shut down without warning and so that they are willing to provide log data in the event of a breach.

As always, prevention is better than a cure, and here are some lessons learned from **TJU’s** experience:

- Document everything; sometimes you must prove that you have not had a security breach.
- Establish security procedures before a breach occurs.
- Monitor system activity.
- Use two-factor authentication.
- Communicate with your users and recognize that libraries are at risk.

When Numbers Don’t Lie

Nobody likes to be the bearer of bad news, but sometimes it is necessary. **Richard Wisneski**, Assistant Director, **Cleveland State**

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University Library, said that when downward trends occur, library administrators, provosts, and faculty members need to know. His advice is to provide an honest and transparent assessment of the collection's strengths and weaknesses, deliver an accurate measurement of what users are and are not using, and identify the most important resources. Retention decisions should not be based solely on cost per use data because platform design affects usage, subjects and content types are not the same, and usage spikes may be anomalous — see **Bucknell's** article in *The Serials Librarian*.³

Changing Your Environment to Support Library Research

Some information professionals, particularly in academic libraries, conduct research. A panel of three of them responded to questions about related issues:

What is your role as a researcher rather than someone that helps others in their research activities?

- Research is a requirement for promotion and tenure, so think about members of the committee evaluating you. Make it easy for them to understand what you do and how it is similar to what they have done in the past.
- Many researchers are very open to having a librarian collaborate with them. Research allows me to bring expertise to them and not be seen as simply a service person. Partnering with researchers helps me to learn about ways I can improve my own work.

Why do you do research?

- It is important to fill in the gaps of knowledge in our profession.
- It is an opportunity to share ideas, publish results, and be an active member of the community.

How do you get support for your research (emotional, funding, or time)?

- The institution supports my time for research, but there is never enough.
- The research community outside the library shares common experiences in research.
- You may need to seek out support. Have open conversations with supervisors and get good mentors to give you honest feedback about what will and will not work.
- Ask for time off to do your research; get the Dean's support.
- Advocates outside of the library are invaluable.
- Get quick feedback from student assistants. Ask them to ask their roommates who don't work in the library (but treat their advice with a large caveat!).
- Market yourself heavily. Call yourself "library faculty" to get better recognition. Take opportunities to make presentations on campus and convey that you are doing research.

How would you like to change the research environment at your institution or in the profession?

- There are many surveys conducted in the library profession; I would like to figure out new methodologies for getting results.
- We have unique opportunities to be a different kind of partner with a different skill set, so we need to be better advocates for ourselves.
- Be a trailblazer for doing more research; inspire your colleagues. Share what you are working on and change the perspective about what librarians do.
- Don't be afraid to ask people to give you advice. Faculty members love research; it's their life blood!

Researching Researchers: Evidence-Based Strategy for Improved Discovery and Access

One of the highlights of the final day of **ER&L** was a double-length session focusing on how users discover and access scholarly information. **Lettie Conrad**, Executive Manager, Product Analysis at **SAGE**, said

that understanding the user experience is critical to making product development choices.

Search often begins with the mainstream Web, but as students advance in their careers, they begin to shift to starting with subject or specialty databases. We must strike a balance between the realities that researchers face with our own ideas of the ideal user, who must have the memory of an elephant, navigation skills of a bat, stamina of a camel, dexterity of a monkey, and visual acuity of an eagle. (For a fanciful image of such a user, see <https://www.flickr.com/photos/julienmey/68666664/>.)

Conrad suggested using a "Sankey diagram" to chart workflows (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sankey_diagram). A study of graduate students showed that many of them used PDF versions of documents and did not interact much with the HTML versions, despite the large effort that most publishers devote to creating them. And once they downloaded an article, they usually did not double check to see if it was still relevant before publishing their results.

SAGE white papers on serendipity and other relevant subjects are available at <http://bit.ly/23Z99d4>.

Deirdre Costello, User Experience Researcher, **EBSCO Information Services**, said that we should be focusing our energy on the search results page. Google and Wikipedia are the foundation of how students do research. We are in an "eye byte" culture — the way we read is changing our attention spans, which are getting shorter.

Students trust Google to surface the most relevant results first. Typically, they only look at the first five results and if they do not see anything relevant, they change the search. They scan results, look for their search term in the title of the snippet, and use Google to create a "constellation of buzzwords." Sometimes they use URLs to judge a site's credibility; .org and .edu are good when writing a paper, but .com sites are regarded skeptically.

Students do not want the library to be like Google; instead, they want it to be a place where they can find relevant content and not be criticized for using it. They generally go directly to the library's search box, do a search, and look for search terms in the title of their results. Authors and databases mean little to them.

Lisa Hinchliffe, Professor/Coordinator for Information Literacy Services and Instruction at the University Library, **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)** noted that **UIUC's** library users consume information voraciously using its discovery service (Easy Search — see <http://library.illinois.edu>), which provides a single search box and presents results either as a classic list of hits or a "Bento display." Transparency, predictability, and discoverability are important. Users want seamless digital delivery, coherent pathways to information, an interface that is as simple as possible (but not simplistic), and easy access to "My Everything." They want the system to treat them as intellectually robust users. Easy Search is aligned with the library's values and expectations and provides better content coverage than commercial discovery indexes. Detailed reports on many of **UIUC's** analyses are available at <http://www.library.illinois.edu/committee/ddst/discoveryresearch.html>.

"Doing Media" — Learning Futures in a World of Change: The Closing Keynote

Professor S. Craig Watkins, from the department of Radio-Television-Film at the **University of Texas**, presented some of his research on young people and how they spend their lives as they interact with media. TV is no longer their dominant medium; they spend up to 13 hours a day online. They do not simply consume media but are participating in a media world; they are "doing media." **Watkins** listed the following observations:

1. *Doing Media*. Young people's relationships with media are complex and changing. Their use of social media is high; according to the Pew Research Center, here are the percentages



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of teens age 13 to 17 who use various services:

Facebook	71	Google+	33
Instagram	52	Vine	24
Snapchat	41	Tumblr	14
Twitter	33	Other	11

2. We live in an area of *demographic explosion*. The face of young America is changing; some teens are exposed to media as much as 13 hours a day.
3. The *digital divide* includes access to social and learning resources that support an ability to use digital media to design, innovate, and intervene in the world around them. Young people have increasing aspirations of doing this.
4. *Design disposition*. Young people want the Internet to be a resource for technology.
5. The "Age of Average" is over. Change is constant. Being average is no longer good enough. We are in a world of two classes of people: those whose skills are being replaced by smart machines and those whose skills complement smart machines.
6. *Design literacy*. What does it mean to be literate in a knowledge-driven economy or in a world where smart technology is pervasive in our lives? It is the capacity to respond to adversity of complexity. We must bring those skills into learning spaces that we create.

7. Paradigm shift for libraries. Here are the key questions:

- Are your library and electronic services built to catalyze design literacy?
- Does your space welcome "design disposition" (making and sharing in a media world)?
- Do you think of libraries as social hubs and laboratories for producing knowledge? Think of them as spaces encouraging collaboration and interaction, not the traditional quiet study space.
- Do your services make learning authentic, resonant, meaningful, and production-oriented? Young people use resources that libraries make available and create their own learning ecology. Libraries provide a vital function in a learning ecosystem.

For further information, see **Watkins'** book, *The Young and the Digital* (<http://theyoungandthedigital.com/>) and his Website <http://doingininnovation.org/>.

The 2017 ER&L conference will be held in Austin, TX on April 2-5. 🐼

Donald T. Hawkins is an information industry freelance writer based in Pennsylvania. In addition to blogging and writing about conferences for *Against the Grain*, he blogs the *Computers in Libraries and Internet Librarian* conferences for *Information Today, Inc. (ITI)* and maintains the *Conference Calendar on the ITI Website* (<http://www.infotoday.com/calendar.asp>). He is the Editor of *Personal Archiving*, (*Information Today*, 2013) and Co-Editor of *Public Knowledge: Access and Benefits* (*Information Today*, 2016). He holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of California, Berkeley and has worked in the online information industry for over 40 years.

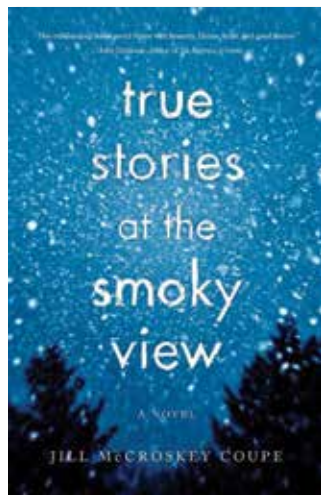
true stories at the smoky view By Jill McCroskey Coupe

The lives of a librarian and a ten-year-old boy are changed forever when they become stranded by a blizzard in a Tennessee motel, join forces in a very personal search for justice, and eventually confront the tyrant responsible for two suspicious deaths.


"With intricate story lines involving murder, library research, road trips, and Vrai's and Jonathan's quest for justice, and motifs including motherhood, love, marriage, betrayal, and true friendship, there is something for everyone in this light/dark Southern novel by a writer to watch." —*Library Journal*

"This exhilarating debut novel brims with honesty, charm, heart, and good humor." —*John Dufresne, author of No Regrets, Coyote*

"This is a story that creeps up on you: charming at first, then wrapping you in its spell until you truly feel the characters' losses and what they have at stake. The plot is something you could almost imagine happening, yet just quirky enough to leave you with a frisson of escapist delight. Coupe's work is reminiscent of such varied sources as *The Decameron*, private eye stories and the films of Woody Allen. But ultimately, it's its own amiable and poignant self." —*The Ivy Bookshop blog*



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Endnotes

1. **Hawkins, Donald T.**, "Something New: Electronic Resources & Libraries," *Information Today*, 24(4): 25, 32 (April 2007).
2. **Levine-Clark, McDonald, and Price**, "Discovery or Displacement? A Large-Scale Longitudinal Study of the Effect of Discovery Systems on Online Journal Usage," *UKSG Insights*, 27(3): 249-56 (2014).
3. **Bucknell, Terry**, "Garbage In, Garbage Out: Twelve Reasons Why Librarians Should Not Accept Cost Per Download Figures At Face Value," *The Serials Librarian*, 63: 192-212 (2012).

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Hmmm... was reading an article the other day by **Joe Wikert** (How Sirsi, Alexa, and Other IPAs will Revolutionize Publishing). IPAs (intelligent personal assistants) — **Apple's Sirsi** and **Amazon's Alexa** are gimmicks right now it seems like. I know people who use **Sirsi** religiously but I don't have a need for it, at least not yet. And I have never used **Alexa**. **Wikert** likes IPAs because he says they will "enable us to have conversations with the most knowledgeable experts we'll never meet and who really don't even exist." Will the book and the journal and containers go away? Does anyone want to guest edit an issue of *ATG* on this topic? The evolution or is it demise of the "container" for content/information?
www.Bookbusinessmag.com/

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